



Santa Rosa's productive grasslands serve as an important resource for developing replacement heifers for use in advancing the quality of our cow-calf operations across other ranches.

**Ranching 6****Education 8****Science 11**

FROM THE CEO NEAL WILKINS

SANTA ROSA RANCH

By the time this summer issue of our newsletter goes out, we will have had our June Meeting of East Foundation's Board of Directors. This summer meeting of the Board is when we traditionally meet jointly with our Investment Committee and our investment advisors from Makena (out of Menlo Park, California). To give this group the full experience of South Texas in June we will spend a day touring East Foundation's Santa Rosa Ranch near Sarita and Riviera, in Kenedy County. At just over 18,600 acres, Santa Rosa plays an important role in our ranching, science, and conservation efforts.

IMPORTANT FEATURES

The Santa Rosa Ranch includes part of the Kenedy Sand Prairie which is the largest remaining intact prairie in Texas. The ranch lies in the northeastern

corner of the South Texas Coastal Sand Plain – the smallest of the 14 major ecological regions of Texas. Los Olmos Creek forms the northern boundary of the ranch, draining into Laguna Salada approximately three miles to the east. Laguna Salada represents the southwestern edge of the Baffin Bay complex. As such, the elevation of Santa Rosa Ranch is uniformly low, and terrain is relatively flat with shallow depressional wetlands interspersed throughout the central half of the ranch.

With mean annual rainfall close to 28 inches and soils well-suited for high forage production, much of this ranch has greater and more reliable productivity than do many of our ranchlands to the west. The northern two-thirds of the ranch is highly productive habitat for bobwhite quail, Rio Grande turkeys, and white-tailed deer. The wetland complex – a prominent feature on greater than 50% of the ranch – provides habitat for a variety of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. In the southern portion, the live oak forests and mature mesquite woodlands provide unique habitat for a variety of birds, including the ferruginous pygmy-owl that was listed in July 2023 as threatened

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Locations

Hebbronville

310 East Galbraith Street
Hebbronville, Texas 78361

San Antonio Viejo Ranch

474 East Ranch Road
Hebbronville, Texas 78361

El Sauz Ranch

37216 Highway 186
Port Mansfield, Texas 78598

San Antonio

200 Concord Plaza Drive, Suite 410
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eastfoundation.net



ABOUT US

East Foundation promotes the advancement of land stewardship through ranching, science, and education.

We manage more than 217,000 acres of native South Texas rangeland, operated as six separate ranches in Jim Hogg, Kenedy, Starr, and Willacy counties. Our land is a working laboratory where scientists and managers work together to address issues important to wildlife management, rangeland health, and ranch productivity. We ensure that ranching and wildlife management work together to conserve healthy rangelands.

East Foundation was created through the generous gift of the East family in 2007. To honor their legacy, we uphold their vision and values that were established more than a century ago. In pursuit of our mission, we use our abundant natural resources to build future leaders through programs that introduce students to private land stewardship. We invest in future professionals through internships, graduate fellowships, and close engagements with university programs.

We care for our land and are always exploring more efficient ways to get things done and are continuously guided by our values to conserve the land and resources.

We do what's right for the land and the life that depends on it.

under the Endangered Species Act.

Brush encroachment is a challenge across much of the ranch. So, over the last several years, across about 10,000 acres, we employed vegetation management using selective herbicide treatments followed by prescribed fire. The response has been a return to more open grasslands representing a historic condition – with this comes greater forage productivity. We capitalize on this greater forage productivity to grow and develop young heifers to be used as production cow replacements into the cow-calf herds in other parts of East Foundation’s ownership. For our science program, a major part of this ranch also serves as one of the experimental areas for our bobwhite quail research into the limits of sustainable quail hunting.

HISTORY

In contrast with our other ranch holdings, the Santa Rosa Ranch was more recently acquired. A western portion of the ranch – about 3,300 acres – was purchased from Kathleen McGill Enyart by Robert East and his sister Lica in 1989. In 1993, they purchased the remainder – about 15,000 acres – from Francis McGill Stewart (Kathleen’s cousin).

The McGill’s were a family of prominent cattlemen and ranchers in parts of South Texas throughout the last century. Frank McGill, along with his brother Claude purchased the original Santa Rosa Ranch from ranching pioneer Dillard Fant in 1918. At the time, this included over 56,000 acres, most of which went through family partitions and sales over the years. The East Foundation’s holdings maintain the namesake of the original ranch.

Frank McGill and Tom T. East, Sr. were friends and business partners until Tom East’s death in 1943. They would have known each other well when, in 1936, Frank McGill was elected President of Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. Frank McGill’s sons – Claude, Frank Jr., and Scott – all spent significant time on Santa Rosa, hunting and raising cattle. The McGill’s built a home on the ranch in 1940 where Frank McGill and his three sons hosted military officers for hunting trips during World War II. This home stayed in the McGill family home until recent years – and it is now maintained by the East Foundation. ◇

Aerial image of East Foundation’s Santa Rosa Ranch.





OUR PEOPLE

Just as the East Foundation mission drives our organizational focus, our people are the boots on the ground who work diligently to promote land stewardship through our ranching operations, science-focused research, and informative educational programs. Below are highlights on the foundation's recent hires and promotions, as well as news regarding recent promotions and awards.



TINA BUFORD

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Tina Buford is a native Texan and a sixth-generation rancher. As the Director of Education at the East Foundation, she is responsible for expanding natural resource education opportunities in South Texas

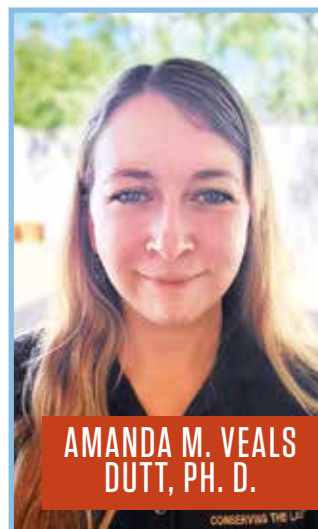
Tina has a B.S. in Rangeland Ecology and Management from Texas A&M University, and a Certificate in Ranch

Management from Texas Christian University. Prior to joining us at the East Foundation, she spent 15 years working alongside her sister, father, and uncle at the H. Yturria Ranch managing both cattle and wildlife.

Tina is an active member of numerous conservation and land stewardship organizations, including Texan by Nature, Texas Wildlife Association, and the Sand County Foundation. She is also a Texas State Soil and Water Conservation board member. This April, Tina received the Harvey Weil Professional Conservationist of the Year from the Rotary Club of Corpus Christi.

The Harvey Weil Professional Conservationist of the Year is presented to individuals who have been leading

conservationists in either the marine or wildlife environments. Recipients promote conservation and environmental interests in the same manner Harvey Weil did during his lifetime. The East Foundation is proud that the Rotary Club of Corpus Christi has acknowledged Tina's dedication to conserving South Texas's natural heritage and nurturing a generation of informed conservationists.



**AMANDA M. VEALS
DUTT, PH. D.**

ALUMNI PROFILE


Amanda grew up in Arizona, recreating in the Sonoran Desert and surrounding mountains. She always had a passion for wildlife and wild places, but Amanda never knew there was a profession dedicated to wildlife conservation.

She went to the University of Arizona to study biochemistry and hated the thought of toiling over a lab bench for a career. Thankfully, after just one biology course, she found many professionals who worked outside of labs and made

a living doing what she had only seen on National Geographic. A quick change of her major, and Amanda began her career in the wildlife conservation field.

Amanda graduated from the University of Arizona with a B.S. in 2014. She stayed to pursue her M.S. from the same institution in natural resources management. During her M.S. she studied gray fox ecology and rabies management. In 2018, she moved to South Texas to begin her Ph.D. at Texas A&M University-Kingsville working with Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute and the East Foundation.

Growing up in Arizona, Amanda thought she had a good sense of conservation in the western U.S. However, working in Texas was a new experience and one she wouldn't trade for the world. Amanda's Ph.D. work focused on the endangered ocelot and mitigation efforts for reducing road mortality. Through her Ph.D., Amanda learned the ins and outs of working on private lands in Texas. The East Foundation was instrumental to the success of her research and her personal growth as a young professional.

Amanda defended her Ph.D. in 2021 and quickly accepted her first post-doctoral position in 2022. Thanks to her time spent working with the East Foundation and Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, she was well prepared for what came next. Amanda has worked for the last two years in west Texas at the Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross State University where she leads research focused on carnivores, mentors her own graduate students, and teaches several courses. Amanda credits much of her success in west Texas balancing carnivore conservation and landowner concerns to her time spent behind the gates with the East Foundation. 



PROUD PARTNER



Texas Farm Credit is dedicated to fostering the future of conservation through education in collaboration with the East Foundation. As a proud partner of the East Foundation's Behind the Gates program, they extend their support to promote land stewardship and environmental education in South Texas.

Through Behind the Gates, Texas Farm Credit joins hands with the East Foundation to provide students from diverse backgrounds, including underserved communities, with immersive learning experiences. These experiences, held on the Foundation's expansive ranches, offer interactive lessons that encourage students to forge connections with the natural world through hands-on outdoor activities.

"At Texas Farm Credit, we're honored to stand alongside the East Foundation in championing the Behind the Gates educational program," said Texas Farm Credit Chief Operating Officer, Jolene Curtis. "Our partnership underscores our firm belief in nurturing the next generation of stewards for our land and wildlife. Together, we're investing in a future where agriculture and conservation thrive through knowledge and action."

Through this partnership, Texas Farm Credit continues to invest in the region's youth, ensuring that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and leadership qualities necessary for the sustainable management of South Texas' precious rangelands. Their collaboration with the East Foundation exemplifies a dedication to building a brighter, more environmentally conscious future for generations to come.



Please visit <https://texasfarmcredit.com/> to learn more about this valued partner.



FROM THE RANCH

EDDIE REYNA AND LONDON SCHOFIELD

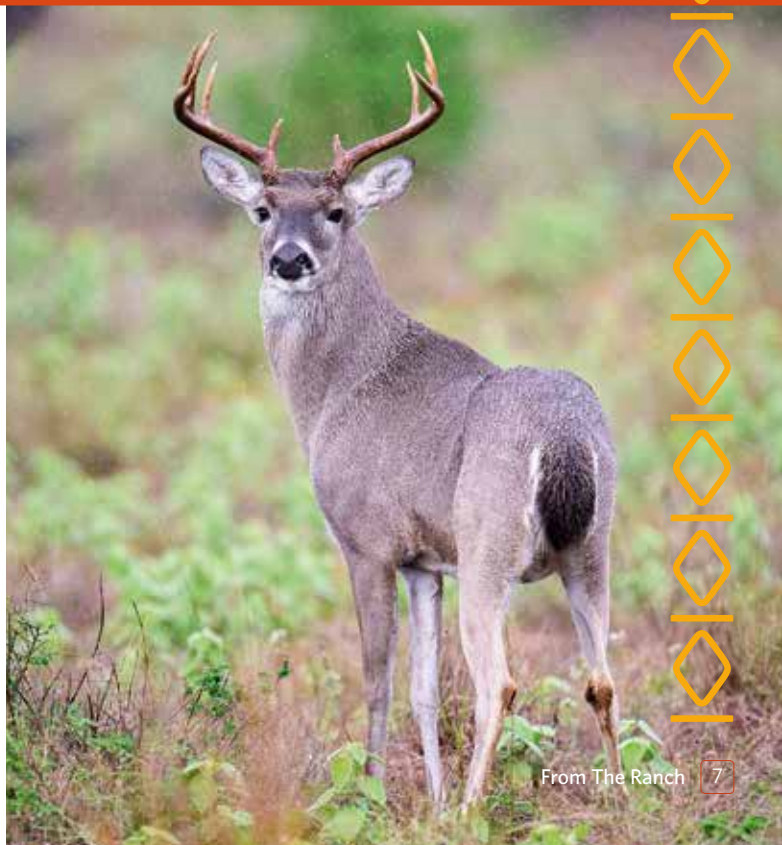


Ranches Stay Busy during the South Texas Summer


Summer in South Texas is what one would expect it to be, hot. However, the ranch crew stays busy despite the challenging heat. With the conclusion of the spring branding season comes the beginning of weaning our fall-born calves and pregnancy checking cows. Two of our ranches, Buena Vista, and El Sauz, function as our fall calving divisions. These cattle are weaned and preconditioned in June and then marketed throughout the summer and fall. Cows that come up open (not pregnant), are then marketed to make room for younger cows that are entering our fall herds. Once we finish that round of work, it is time to pull bulls off our spring herds. We will pregnancy test the first exposure heifers in August and the remaining mature cows in September and October. This also allows us to take inventory of our bull battery; in other words, which bulls did their job during the breeding season and

gives us a preview of which bulls need to be replaced. We can then make our bull procurement plan for the upcoming year.

It's not all cattle work over the summer. We have projects to complete in all facets of the business, and June kicks off our budget planning season for the Ranches. As we approach the end of our fiscal year, we finalize next year's financial projections and plan capital projects we intend to complete. Summer is when we accomplish most of our vegetation management, specifically herbicide application, using individual plant treatment (IPT), broadcast, and aerial applications. We focus on mesquite and huisache control, as foliar applications have the best success rates in the summer. Maintaining open country for both cattle and wildlife is a full-time job, so we try to take advantage of any time we have. We



also conduct prescribed burns in the summer on our El Sauz Ranch as part of a long-term research project. Our team works diligently to prepare our burn plots and to prevent wildfires. As forage dries out with consecutive weeks of 100-plus degree temperatures, the dry vegetation becomes a fire risk. Our team spends hundreds of hours in the tractor shredding roads and disking firebreaks to protect our operations and our rangeland. Our water crew is busy keeping our water infrastructure running in case an emergency response is needed, but also to provide for the needs of our livestock and wildlife.

The list of things never seems to get any shorter and each day brings its new challenges, but we are optimistic that the rain will come, the temperatures will cool off, and we will be into the fall before we know it. 



SCHOOL'S OUT FOR SUMMER, BUT THE EDUCATION TEAM CONTINUES TO EDUCATE.

TEACHER WORKSHOPS

Since 2015, our educators have hosted 79 teacher workshops across South Texas and virtually. We have impacted 1,633 teachers who have then gone on to impact 158,191 students. We conduct these teacher workshops in partnership with Texas Wildlife Association as we deploy their curriculum.

Teacher Workshops are six (6) hour trainings that introduce attendees to the Texas Wildlife Association, in-class and outdoor lessons and activities, and how to incorporate natural resources into classrooms or programming. Lessons focus on teaching land stewardship, native wildlife, and water conservation and are Science TEKS-aligned for grades K-8.

The East Foundation is committed to giving teachers the tools they need to incorporate the importance of land stewardship in the classroom. This commitment is reflected in our educators. Their close ties to the local school districts are extremely important to our success. School districts also see great value in our

workshops. Some even offer incentives such as a Gifted and Talented update, trade day, and even a paid stipend if teachers attend our workshops.

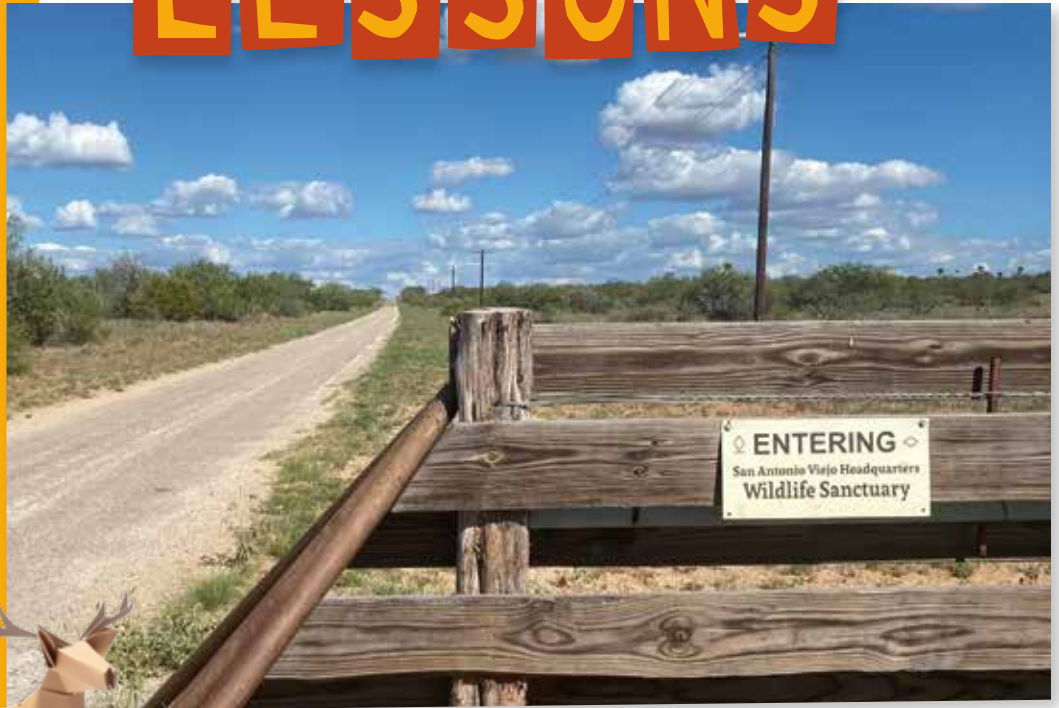
What kind of teachers attend our workshops? All kinds! In addition to the science and ag teachers you would expect, we have also hosted creative writing, homeschool, kindergarten and Spanish educators.

WHAT FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS DO OUR WORKSHOPS RECEIVE?

- “ Thank you for always making learning fun. ”
- “ Everything was excellent and well planned. I love the way we feel so comfortable in these low stress high learning sessions with Mrs. Mejia. She is very knowledgeable and extremely helpful. ”
- “ It is amazing how much you can learn when someone who obviously loves what they do and shares it with you. I then went home and shared new things I learned that day with my husband. ”

LESSONS

Teacher Workshops are six (6) hour trainings that introduce attendees to the Texas Wildlife Association, in-class and outdoor lessons and activities, and how to incorporate natural resources into classrooms or programming. Lessons focus on teaching land stewardship, native wildlife, and water conservation and are Science TEKS-aligned for Grades K-8.



“ I enjoyed all the demonstrations provided and the opportunities to engage in the activities as well. Elisa was equally informative, fun, and engaging. ”

“ Just learning about stewardship. I never realized how much of our actions play a role in the environment and nature. More importantly, how evident it is to pass on that knowledge to younger generations. ”

ADULT EDUCATION

In the summer of 2023, Jesus Rodriguez - County Extension Agent for Zapata County reached out to see if our education team could provide professional development for the District 12 Texas County Agricultural Agents Association during the fall. A program was crafted highlighting how the three pillars of ranching, science, and education integrate to execute the mission of East Foundation. During their time on the San Antonio Viejo, county agents went on a tour visiting a hand dug well where Tina

Buford discussed the history and legacy of the East family and settlements dating back to the 1700s. Garrett Stribling provided an overview of our cattle operation. Andrea Montalvo presented a summary of the range management practices across the ranches. County agents visited with Eric Garza who serves as the District Leader for Texas Parks and Wildlife. Eric led a deer necropsy for the agents. Together these experiences allowed for the county agents to take back knowledge to their counties and producers about the work we do.

FEEDBACK FROM COUNTY AGENTS INCLUDE:

“ Truly an eye-opening experience to see how vast and diverse the operations of the East Foundation are. They are committed to preserving the land and its natural resources while still implementing technology to improve production efficiency. Their cattle operation is a great example of this as it has improved tremendously in just the two years that I had the fortune to witness it. Also, kudos to them for their continued research and



Schools Out For Summer cont.


conservation of wildlife. Their handshake approach to working with landowners to reintroduce endangered species is definitely more friendly than the past approach of imposing landowner restrictions. Great job by all their employees. True commitment to their mission. Thanks for allowing us the opportunity to learn more about their past, present and future. ”

– Rogelio Mercado, CEA – Jim Wells County



“ The agents retreat we had at the East Foundation San Antonio Viejo Ranch was an unforgettable experience. Getting to see the ranch and everything they do from an operations side was wonderful. All the staff were very welcoming and accommodating to us agents. Everyone that spoke to us was very professional and knowledgeable in the topic they covered. The East Foundation and Texas A&M AgriLife have similar missions and goals and have a great partnership. With this experience, we have opened more doors to collaboration between agents and the Foundations. ”

– Jesse Rodriguez, CEA – Zapata County.

Looking forward to the rest of the year, our education team has scheduled several teacher workshops over the summer. They’ll also be planning for the next school year which includes Behind The Gates in the classroom and out on the land. 





In March 2024, East Foundation CEO Neal Wilkins shook hands with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Deputy Director Siva Sundaresan and Southwest Regional Director Amy Lueders after the three signed a Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement authorizing ocelot reintroduction on the East Foundation's San Antonio Viejo Ranch. The Safe Harbor assures private landowners in the ocelot reintroduction area of the continued freedom to operate with no land use restrictions or liabilities related to ocelots.



POLICY AND ENDANGERED SPECIES STEWARDSHIP


At its El Sauz Ranch on Texas' southern Gulf Coast, the East Foundation is protecting one of the last remaining areas in the U.S. known to be occupied by ocelots, a federally endangered species. East Foundation has developed plans to expand U.S. ocelot populations by reintroducing the iconic cat to the Foundation's San Antonio Viejo Ranch – a private working cattle ranch that has no ocelots but is within their historic range in Texas.

When East Foundation and conservation partners first began assessing the feasibility of ocelot reintroduction in 2021, they knew it would be necessary to engage in policy that could provide private landowners with assurances and certainty that Endangered Species Act regulations for reintroduced ocelots would not create new regulatory risks to private lands operations where the reintroduction takes place.

To obtain that certainty, East Foundation developed a Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement for ocelot reintroduction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Under the Safe Harbor, which was officially approved by USFWS during an event at El Sauz in March 2024, the East Foundation can establish a new ocelot population on San Antonio Viejo and nearby private lands with the accompaniment of assurances that there will be no Endangered Species Act "incidental take" liability for reintroduced ocelots, nor any ocelot-related restrictions on private landowners' land uses. The Safe Harbor Agreement allows new areas of private working land to be put forward for ocelot recovery efforts, and it signals a milestone in ocelot conservation planning.

The ongoing effort toward ocelot reintroduction has shown that policy is a critical part of conserving threatened or endangered species on private lands, which make up more than 95% of the land base in Texas. While the Endangered Species Act historically took a regulatory, command-and-control approach to endangered species conservation on private lands, landowners can engage in policies such as Safe Harbor Agreements to remove many of the regulatory disincentives often associated with having protected species on one's property.

Building off its work with the ocelot, East Foundation's science team is researching other Endangered Species Act programs and policies that allow landowners to obtain certainty and predictability regarding Endangered Species Act liability in exchange for efforts to sustain or increase populations of protected species on their private lands. Additionally, East Foundation is learning about available economic incentive programs for species conservation. Such programs can help pay for conservation efforts and allow landowners to tangibly realize the value of harboring species of conservation concern on their properties.

Reliable scientific information is critical to successful private land stewardship and wildlife management. So is understanding the policy landscape surrounding these endeavors. East Foundation is leading efforts to increase private landowners' knowledge related to endangered species policy and programs to ultimately support more informed and effective decision-making regarding operations, as well as the land and the species it supports. Our efforts and leadership in this space can support private land stewardship in South Texas and beyond. 



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